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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [PHUM](#) [ENRG](#) [TU](#) [AJ](#)
SUBJECT: IDEAS FOR PROMOTING A U.S.-AZERBAIJAN-TURKEY
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Classified By: Ambassador Anne E. Derse for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) This is a joint message from Embassies Ankara and Baku.

12. (C) Embassy Ankara and Embassy Baku provide the following informal suggestions to follow up with EUR A/S Fried's December 2007 speech at the Mayflower Hotel on a strategic partnership among the U.S., Turkey, and Azerbaijan. Both embassies brainstormed about potential steps the the U.S. could take to implement the ideas contained in Fried's speech.

13. (C) The Embassies' informal suggestions follow and are broken down by sector:

Context: Strengthening the level of cooperation between the U.S., Turkey, and Azerbaijan will reinforce Azerbaijan and Turkey,s ties to the U.S., while linking the U.S. and Turkey more closely in their shared objective of promoting stability, democracy, and prosperity in the Caucasus region.

- Both countries traditionally have sought increased freedom of action vis--vis Russia. While Ankara has transformed its relations with Moscow since the end of the Cold War -- especially with regard to trade and investment -- Turkey and Azerbaijan have a long history of seeing Russia as a threat to their sovereignty. U.S. steps to encourage a trilateral partnership should take advantage of both states, concerns to maximize their freedom of action vis--vis Russia.

- Both the U.S. and Turkey seek to bind Azerbaijan to the West. A trilateral "strategic partnership" would augment Turkey,s policy of helping to integrate the South Caucasus region with Western, transatlantic institutions, while further solidifying Turkey,s own pro-U.S., Western orientation.

- Through the July 2006 Shared Vision document, the U.S. and Turkey have already pledged to work together to contribute to stability, democracy, and prosperity in the Caucasus. The Structured Dialogue portion of the document created four new U.S.-Turkey consultation mechanisms which, as appropriate, can be expanded and utilized to help implement the trilateral strategic partnership.

- An institutionalized U.S.-Turkey-Azerbaijan mechanism could be a vehicle for facilitating a Turkey opening to Armenia and managing the Turkey-Azerbaijan fallout.

Political Steps

- Create a trilateral forum led by each country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to advance a political, economic, and security dialogue.
- Encourage three-way parliamentary exchanges.
- Enhance and encourage three-way judicial and legal training and exchanges.

Trade and Investment

- Encourage joint commercial fora and trade delegations. (Baku is a partnership post for FCS Ankara.)
- Facilitate contact among leading U.S., Turkish and Azerbaijani business groups, such as TUSIAD, DEIK, MUSIAD, TOBB, ATIB, AmCham, and USACC, to promote greater economic and commercial coordination.
- Encourage Azerbaijan to work with the U.S. and Turkey to identify areas for development that would be attractive to a joint U.S.-Turkish business effort.
- Create a U.S.-Turkish-Azerbaijani investment forum to discuss best practices in stimulating investment (foreign and domestic) and new business creation. Such a forum could run the gamut of topics from small business to large scale investment. For small business development, it could examine best practices for simplifying local, provincial, and national regulations for business start-ups; for large-scale investment, it could examine the effectiveness of tax breaks or free trade zones. (There has already been some

consideration of a U.S.-Turkey-Azerbaijan economic cooperation conference during ATC week, April 14-18.)

- Foster joint U.S.-Turkish projects to support Azerbaijani reform in the health and education sectors. Turkish and U.S. hospitals and universities could partner with each other and their Azerbaijani counterparts. Doing so could create models of excellence and would give Turkish and American commercial interests a platform for advocating reform in both sectors.

Energy and Environment

- Create a joint U.S.-Turkey-Azerbaijan Energy forum to help expedite the development and transit of Caspian gas to Western markets. This forum could also be a vehicle to share U.S. experiences and R&D in energy conservation and savings. (Turkish Energy Minister Guler has already proposed such a group to Energy Secretary Bodman.)
- Promote joint environmental cooperation projects/water management projects.

Military

- Encourage trilateral military exercises. The exercises can focus on building skills that Azerbaijan and Turkey identify as priority areas, especially those related to peacekeeping.
- When appropriate, encourage more joint Azerbaijani-Turkish military deployments abroad under a variety of auspices when the mission advances U.S. interests (NATO umbrella).
- Turkey has excellent access to the Azerbaijani military. Encourage the embedding of both Turkish and American officers in the Azerbaijani military and seek to establish contacts with Turkish officers working with the Azerbaijani military.
- Maintain and attempt to increase the number of opportunities for Azerbaijani officers to be trained in

Turkey and the U.S.

Counterterrorism/Regional Cross-Cutting Issues

- Encourage U.S.-Azerbaijani-Turkish joint counterterrorism intelligence sharing and joint CT activities. Enhanced CT cooperation could buttress Azerbaijan's capabilities and understanding of the threat from religious extremists.
- Expand training of Azerbaijani officials at the Ankara-based NATO Center of Excellence on Defense Against Terrorism (COE-DAT).
- Enhance trilateral Trafficking-in-Persons/Drugs Trafficking/Arms Trafficking/Counter Proliferation training and exchanges. For example, extend additional training to Azerbaijani law enforcement at the Turkish International Academy Against Drugs and Organized Crime (TADOC).
- Provide joint training to Turkish and Azerbaijani officials at U.S. law enforcement training academies.

Cultural/NGO

- Joint U.S.-Turkish-Azerbaijani tailored IVLPs, e.g., media, human rights, TIP, etc.
 - Free press: Journalist training, journalism scholarships, and internships. While Ankara has been unwilling to publicly engage Baku over democratization and press freedom, Ankara has been prepared to engage in more training and exchanges in this area. Supporting enhanced training and exchanges could develop over time into a more robust dialogue.
- DERSE